



F.N. Brown School

Parent Information Guide

Revised January 2017

F.N. Brown School

125 Grove Avenue

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Mrs. Alina Dugan, Administrative Assistant (adugan@veronaschools.org)

School Phone Number.....(973) 571-6753
Attendance Line.....Press 2
Main Office.....Press 3
School Nurse.....Press 4
Child Study Team Office.....Ext: 4023
Fax..... (973) 571-6769

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The purpose of this guide is to share information about the offerings, procedures, and organization of F.N. Brown School. In doing so, we hope that you will better understand our school and thereby be able to use our services more effectively.

No written communication can answer all questions, so we invite you to visit our school office and become acquainted. We look forward to sharing in a partnership for your child's education.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lanzo

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VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dedicated to Developing Healthy Habits of Mind, Body and Heart

Verona Public Schools Mission Statement:

Our mission is to prepare students to be scholars and productive citizens through outstanding teaching, challenging curricula, and engaging co-curricular programs in safe and modern facilities.

Verona Schools Website

www.veronaschools.org

Board of Education

121 Fairview Avenue

Superintendent’s Office/Business Office..... (973) 571-2029
Fax..... (973) 571-6779

The Verona Board of Education normally holds its regular public meetings on the second and last Tuesday of each month at 8:00PM in the Verona High School library. The Board of Education is an elected, five member board of Verona citizens.

School Hours

Kindergarten.....8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Grades 1-4 Morning Session.....8:30 a.m. – 11:45 p.m.
Lunch / Recess.....11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Afternoon Session.....12:30 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Students should **not** report to school before 8:15 am unless enrolled in Before Care.

Before Care Program

Before Care services are provided by the YMCA for the students from 7:30-8:15 a.m. Please inquire for registration of these services in the school office.

Extended Care Program

Extended Care services are provided by the YMCA for the students until 6:00 p.m. Please inquire for registration of these services in the school office.

District Calendar

The district calendar is available online on the Verona Public Schools’ website (www.veronaschools.org). Any changes made to the calendar during the course of the school year will be reflected on that calendar.

F.N. Brown School

F.N. Brown School maintains a detailed calendar on the school website. All events, vacations, trips, school lunches etc. are included.

Verona Public Schools Joint SCA Program and Calendar Booklet

At the beginning of the school year, all families will be provided with this booklet. It includes information about all SCA officers, committees and events.

Student Drop-Off / Pick-Up Procedures

The following procedures are in place for the orderly and safe drop-off/pick-up of the students of F.N. Brown School. **It is very important that each family review and agree to adhere to these procedures which will ensure the safety of the children.**

Traffic and Safety

Students are to use the crossing guard and crosswalk at the front of the building to cross Grove Avenue. If students are dropped off on the opposite side of Grove Avenue, parents should make sure that their child (ren) utilize the crossing guard to cross the street. We ask that parents do not make exceptions for themselves. The children model their behavior after you. If they see adults crossing anywhere, they will assume permission to do so. The time to take this procedure seriously is before an accident.

Cars should not enter the driveway (side of school) or Teacher's Parking Lot (across from school) to drop off or pick up students. Cars crossing the sidewalk in front of the school pose a serious safety risk to students.

Arrival-First Day of School

We will have an outside line up (weather permitting) on the first day of school. Kindergarteners will meet their teachers outside of the library door entrance on the first day of school between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m. **Grades 1 and 2** teachers will greet their classes outside of the main entrance (center doors) between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m. **Grades 3 and 4** will meet their teachers outside of the auditorium entrance between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m. The classroom teachers will lead all students to the classrooms. Ms. Connallon's class should line up daily with their homeroom (K, 1, or 2) and Mrs. Sapienza's class should line up daily with their homeroom (grades 3 or 4) respectively as well.

Daily Arrival

Students will line up **inside** the building **beginning on the second day of school through the last day of school** at the assigned areas (Kindergarten/Library, Grades 1 and 2/Main Office Hallway, Grades 3 and 4/Auditorium Foyer) for safety and traffic reasons. We are located on a busy county road; therefore, we have a daily indoor line up. The students will be supervised by the staff and the Principal beginning at 8:15 a.m. each day. Please do not send your child (ren) to school before 8:15 a.m. since supervision is not available.

Dismissal

Dismissal time for students in kindergarten is at 12:30 p.m. Dismissal time for students in grades 1-4 is at 2:45 p.m. Dismissal is from the Library doors, Main Office doors, or Auditorium doors based on homeroom.

Emergency Closing

If it becomes necessary to close, delay the opening, or shorten the day of the Verona Public Schools because of extreme weather or other emergency conditions, parents will be notified by the computerized calling system. An announcement will also be carried over the following: FOX TV Channel 5 and News 12 Jersey; 1010 WINS (AM radio) and 710 WOR (AM radio). Messages will also be posted on the district website.

Each fall, parents will be requested to complete the Verona Public Schools Family Contact Form. Information from this form will be used to contact you through the computerized, email and texting system. It is critical that this form is completed immediately and returned on the first day of school.

DELAYED OPENING

Delayed opening procedures may be used as an alternative to the regular full-day closing of schools for emergency weather conditions.

Kindergarten.....10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
1-4.....10:00 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.
Supervision begins at 9:50 a.m.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Early Dismissal Hours – K-48:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
No lunch is served on early dismissal days.

Code of Conduct

The elementary schools focus on academic achievement but recognize the importance of growth and development of the whole student as part of the larger community. Student actions contribute to the school’s environment and go a long way in creating a positive atmosphere for learning and socializing. Therefore, the Verona elementary schools have established a Code of Conduct for all students to promote appropriate behavior as well as support for each other. The document posted on the F.N. Brown School page on the district website (www.veronaschools.org) expresses our values through behavioral expectations and responsibilities. Through the combined efforts of students, staff, parents and administration, it is our goal to prepare students to be contributing and supportive members of the school and community.

Instructional Program

The Verona School District has established a philosophy of education, a set of goals, a detailed elementary curriculum and a scope and sequence which is published and available for review on the district website within the “Academics” tab menu under the “Curriculum Document” link.

The Board of Education has final approval in determining curriculum. The professional staff regularly evaluates existing curriculum and makes recommendations to the Board on revisions and improvements reflecting current trends in education and the instructional needs of Verona students.

World Language

Students at F.N. Brown Elementary School begin Spanish instruction in grade one and continue until grade four. First and second grade students receive Spanish instruction once a week for 30 minutes. Third and fourth grade students receive Spanish instruction twice a week for 30 minutes. A variety of techniques including TPR (Total Physical Response), games, songs, verbal, and written practice are used to practice key basic concepts in Spanish. Students participate in an annual assembly to showcase what they have learned throughout the year.

Kindergarten Registration / Program

A child must be 5 years old on or before October 1st for admission to kindergarten. January is designated for kindergarten registration. Specific dates are published in the local newspaper and announcements are distributed through the schools. Parents are requested to complete and return an enrollment form and present the child's birth certificate and proof of residency during the month of January. When you register you will be given a packet of health forms and a Pre-Kindergarten Questionnaire which should be returned by a specific date.

A kindergarten orientation for parents will be held after registration. At this meeting, an overview of the school with an emphasis on the kindergarten program will be presented.

The SCA will hold Pre-K workshops to help in the acclimation of the student to the new school. Scheduling of these workshops will be determined.

The kindergarten program reflects a balance between formal and informal activity. The daily schedule allows the child to participate in individual, small group and total class activities. The program involves self-directed activity, group discussion and teacher directed activities in language arts, reading readiness, mathematics readiness, social science, science, artistic expression, environmental and affective education. Special subject instruction in the areas of music, art, physical education, health and safety and media are provided by special teachers to all kindergarten pupils. **Please fill out the enrollment form-permanent record information in detail. Please indicate language, other than English, spoken in the home by parents or child and country of origin if applicable.**

Grades 1-4 Instructional Program

The elementary curriculum includes instruction in the areas of listening, reading, speaking, writing, spelling, handwriting, and in the disciplines of mathematics, social studies and science. There are uniform standards and requirements for curriculum and materials at each grade level. All curricula meet the requirements of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and National Common Core Standards. Special subject instruction in the areas of vocal music, art, physical education, health and safety, technology, library and Spanish, are provided to all students by subject matter specialists. Fourth grade students who are interested may choose to participate in instrumental music. Third grade students who play a band instrument may audition to take group lessons mid-year.

Field Trips

Field Trips are scheduled to enrich and extend the school's curriculum. In September all students will receive local field trip permission slips to be signed and returned to the school office. This permission applies to visits to in-town sites of interest by walking or school bus. Parents are informed of other field trips by a notice. Transportation is provided by the school. All school buses are fitted with seat belts. A parent's signature on a trip permission slip is required before the child is allowed to board the bus. At times, an admission charge is required for an activity. Class parents are utilized as chaperones. Classroom teachers will alert all parents if additional chaperones are needed.

Verona G & T Identification Criteria K-4 *Effective for the 2016-2017 School Year*

1. Students will be given the CogAT in the spring of 2016.
2. Students will be given the Cumulative Math Assessment in the spring of 2016.
3. Students will be given the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2) in the fall of 2016.

English Language Arts (ELA) Gifted & Talented Identification

→ We average the results of the Verbal battery section of the CogAT and the DRA2. Students whose score fall in the top 15% are identified as gifted and talented in ELA.

Mathematics Gifted & Talented Identification

We average the results of the Non-Verbal and Quantitative batteries and the Cumulative Math Assessment. Students whose score falls in the top 15% are identified as gifted and talented in mathematics.

According to our Board Policy, 2464 GIFTED AND TALENTED PUPILS (M), "The educational program offered to gifted and talented pupils will encourage and challenge them in the specific areas of their abilities, but will not replace the basic instructional program of the various grades of this district. The program offered to a gifted and talented pupil may be infused into the pupil's regular instructional program, provided that a written description of the infusion has been prepared and filed in the pupil's record."

To enrich your child's learning experiences in the identified subject area(s), classroom teachers' will be differentiating lessons and providing enrichment opportunities to enhance units of study.

Report Cards/Conferences

The school year is divided into trimesters. In order that home and school may work more effectively for the education and training of children, a parent/teacher conference is scheduled right after the end of the first trimester. Report cards are issued three times a year and parents can access a child's report card through the online Parent Portal. An optional conference may be scheduled during the spring at the request of a parent or teacher.

The dates of the fall and spring (optional) parent/teacher conferences are found on the district calendar and in the Joint SCA booklet. Prior to the fall conference dates, parents will receive a parent/teacher conference letter indicating the date and time they are scheduled. The form should be signed and returned to the classroom

teacher. If the time is not convenient, it should be noted on the form and the teacher will contact parents to arrange a mutually convenient time.

Class Placement Process

Each spring, there is considerable discussion about placing children in classes for next school year. When classes are structured, we follow a clear set of guidelines. Classes are formed into deliberate heterogeneous groups with the following in mind:

- gender balance
- a full range of aptitudes within each class
- an even proportion of abilities and learning styles across the classes at each grade level
- social issues
- special needs
- an equal number of pupils in each class on a grade level.

Once these factors have been considered, teachers begin to build a class of children who show promise of working well together. At this point, attempts are made to match pupil and teacher personality and style. Quite understandably, these decisions are based upon observations made by the teachers during the course of the year. While we welcome your input about your child's individual learning needs and style, we trust that you understand that your comments constitute just one of the many factors we consider in forming classes. Please do not request a specific teacher. The final decision on class placements resides with the school.

Please Note: Class placement will be indicated on the last report card. Report cards will be available on-line via Genesis on the last day of school. **All class lists are final.**

Attendance Regulations

Children are expected to be in school every day for all sessions unless ill or excused for State approved religious holidays. A youngster who has any indications of fever, chills, sore throat, etc. should not be sent to school since such symptoms may indicate the beginning of a contagious illness, and it would be neither fair to the child who is ill nor to the children with whom he/she has contact.

Parents are required to contact the school by phone at 973-571-6753 option #2 before 8:30 a.m. to report the absence of their child from school. If a child is absent and the parent has not called the school, a call to the home will be made by the school office.

Each year the Verona Public Schools publishes a school calendar indicating school vacations, testing and other important dates. Parents are requested to schedule family vacations during district vacations. *If students are taken out while school is in-session, please do not ask teachers to provide missed work in advance of the absence. Work will be made up upon return to school.*

Homework

Homework is assigned to extend and reinforce the learning experience of school. It provides children practice in the mastery of skills and experience in data-gathering. Homework helps to develop independent work skills and recognizes the role of the parent to help a child carry out assigned responsibilities. Homework is clearly

assigned and carefully evaluated. The amount of homework is based on students' needs and takes into account other activities which make a legitimate claim on students' time.

Lunch/Cafeteria Facilities

Lunch supervision (Grades 1-4 including Ms. Connallon's class and Mrs. Sapienza's class) will be provided during the first day of school. Students may bring in their own lunch and beverage. The SCA offers special lunches throughout the year starting in October at a minimum cost. The district food service provider Pomptonian offers food options that may be purchased on a monthly basis. Students are under supervision of lunchroom aides between 11:45 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Students eat for 20 minutes and have recess for 20 minutes. Every effort is made to have outside recess, weather permitting. Please be sure to send your child to school with appropriate clothing for outside play.

Home Instruction

Home instruction is available, with the approval of the Board of Education, to any child who is absent from school a minimum of two continuous weeks (10 school days) due to illness subject to the receipt of a doctor's note indicating the diagnosis, the length of time out and that the child is well enough to receive instruction. A certified teacher will be sent to the student's home for up to five hours per week to continue the educational program the pupil was receiving at school. The child may return to school once the doctor has certified that the student is ready to return.

Verona Summer Enrichment Academy (V-SEA)

V-SEA is a unique learning opportunity for students who are currently enrolled in grades pre-k through middle school. The purpose of the Verona Summer Enrichment Academy is to expand the students' knowledge base, build on their interest and encourage critical and creative thinking. Regardless of students' academic competencies, each child will be challenged through the curricular experience with stimulating and motivating activities. Information, along with a list of course offerings, is emailed home through the schools and is available on the district website found at www.veronaschools.org.

School Communications-F.N. Brown SCA

On the first day of school a packet of notices will be sent home. Return requests are made on many of these notices; please try to complete and return them as requested. During the school year, notices will be sent home via hard copy every Wednesday. The school Newsletter is published on a monthly basis via e-mail. Please take special note of our SCA board meetings held throughout the school year. The meetings are conducted in the school library at 7:00 PM and ALL parents are cordially invited. The dates have been outlined in the Joint SCA booklet. Reminder notices highlighting upcoming SCA meetings will be sent home throughout the school year.

Please Note:

Separated or divorced parents who are currently not living with their child (ren) and who desire to receive regular communication from the school should put the request in writing to the school office indicating name, current address, and telephone number. **This request should be repeated each school year.**

Pupil Insurance

Pupil accident insurance is offered to all parents at the beginning of the school year and is optional.

Class Pictures

Individual pupil photographs and class pictures are taken within the first two months of the school year. These are offered for sale to parents through the SCA.

Cultural Arts

The SCA provides our school with numerous assembly programs. Science, dance, theater, history, music, character education and many other subjects are explored through these experiences.

Intervention and Referral Services Committee (I&RS)

The Intervention and Referral Services Committee (I&RS) is a state-mandated, building-based, multidisciplinary, problem-solving team that addresses adult concerns regarding a student's learning, behavior and/or health needs. The committee meets monthly and provides direct assistance and support to staff members and/or parents who have concerns about a student, and the final outcome of interventions ought to result in student improvement. The I&RS committee can address concerns regarding general education and special education students. However, services for students identified as eligible for speech and language or special education services can only be considered in specific circumstances and must be coordinated with the student's IEP team case manager.

Child Study Team

The Child Study Team consists of four members: a social worker, a psychologist, a learning disabilities teacher-consultant and a speech/language therapist. The primary role of the team is to evaluate children who may have a learning and/or an emotional difficulty and to secure supportive services when necessary. When it has been determined that a child needs the support of special services, the Child Study Team works closely with parents and staff in developing individualized programs. The support could take the form of a special class placement or Resource Center instructor while the child attends a regular class. The progress of each child is monitored regularly by the Child Study Team and programs are reviewed and updated annually. A re-evaluation is conducted every three years or earlier if warranted.

F.N. Brown School has an assigned learning disabilities teacher-consultant who maintains an office in the building. Other members of the Child-Study Team have their offices at the Special Services Department (973) 571-2029 ext. 7512.

Verona Preschool Program

The Verona Preschool Program has been in existence for over 30 years. Originally designed as a nursery school experience for children ages 3-5 with special needs, the program currently accepts both general education and special education students. Aligned with the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards and incorporating the HighScope Preschool Curriculum, the preschool program is designed to meet the developmental needs of the individual child. The children are encouraged to explore materials, develop skills and interact in a social setting. The daily routine includes small/large group experiences, circle time, play time, snack, motor activities and language activities.

Located at the Laning Avenue School, the Verona Preschool Program is in operation five days per week and follows the Verona Public Schools calendar. Morning and afternoon classes are available. Morning classes meet

from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and afternoon classes meet from 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monthly meetings focusing on a variety of topics related to the preschool child are available to all parents.

General education enrollment is on a fee basis, limited to the number of available spaces and determined annually by lottery. Students who meet special education eligibility requirements may attend free of charge and are enrolled on their birthday. Children accepted into the three-year-old program may remain for the four-year-old program. Children turning three years of age or four years of age by September 30th are eligible for the lottery that is held each year in February. Pre-School Office - 973-239-9010.

Special Education

A continuum of services is offered at FN Brown Elementary School for our students with special needs:

Supplemental Instruction (Grades K-4)

The Supplemental Instruction program provides direct/indirect academic reinforcement of the general education curriculum for students with special needs, with the purpose of reteaching and reinforcing concepts that are taught in the general education classrooms to provide necessary remediation of skill deficits. This program provides students who require support with one or two particular subjects in the general education classroom, but who are not appropriate for a replacement or self-contained program. This class consists primarily of students who have higher-level cognitive skills with moderate learning deficits.

Resource Room Replacement (2-4)

The Resource Room Replacement Program provides specialized instruction of the general education English/Language Arts and Math curricula to students who require a smaller, more structured learning environment than the general education classroom can provide. Instructional modalities and supplemental materials are provided to students based upon individual learning needs. Students in this class generally participate in the general education setting for all other subjects. This program supports students who require curriculum modification in one or two particular subjects in the general education classroom, but who are not appropriate for a full-day, self-contained special education class.

Learning Language Disability (LLD K-4)

The Language and Learning Disabilities classes are self-contained classrooms that serve children ranging from Kindergarten through fourth grade. This program focuses on a variety of teaching modalities. All modalities and lessons are targeted around the NJ Common Core and Core Curriculum Content Standards, as delineated by the State and Verona School District. Whole group, small group, and individual instruction are incorporated into the classroom throughout the day. All lessons and classroom activities are differentiated to reach the specific learning needs of each individual student. Many activities are created and supplemented with a variety of instructional tools and manipulatives in order to reach all academic and social levels. Students in these classes usually also receive physical, occupational, and speech/language therapy as related services. Supported mainstreaming is available when educationally appropriate.

Speech Therapy

Therapy in the area of speech and language is offered to children who are experiencing difficulty in the articulation of sounds and/or in the reception or expression of language. The speech and language specialist will assess students to determine if they are eligible for services. The therapist provides instruction, individually or in small groups, up to several times a week depending on the needs of the students. Close communication is maintained with the parents through the use of a speech folder.

English as a Second Language (ESL Services)

F.N. Brown has been designated as the elementary school in Verona where students attend who are in need of English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) services. Students whose native language is other than English or if these students live with a parent or grandparent whose native language is other than English are screened for language proficiency skills. The students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills are assessed using a state approved English language test. The proficiency assessment is one of multiple criteria which is used for students to be considered for English language services. Once a student has been identified as needing E.S.L. services, he/she receives 30 minutes of daily instruction at the elementary school level and a class period or 40 minutes at the middle and high school levels.

Formal Testing Program

In the spring of each school year, the first through fourth grade student population will be involved in a series of standardized testing experiences.

Grades One, Two and Three

Students in grades 1, 2 and 3 will participate in a cognitive abilities assessment called the CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test)

Third and Fourth Grade

The third and fourth grade students will participate in the PARCC test (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers). The fourth grade students will also participate in the NJASK Science Assessment.

Access for E.L.L.'s 2.0

Each spring the E.S.L. students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills are assessed in the content areas of reading/language arts, math, science, and social studies with an on-line, secure assessment called ACCESS 2.0. It is recommended that a student achieve a state-determined specific overall score on the ACCESS 2.0, and he/she should be performing on grade level in order to exit the E.S.L. Program. The length of time a student remains in the E.S.L. Program varies for a variety of reasons. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (B.I.C.S.) which a student may attain in 2-3 years and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (C.A.L.P.) which may take 5-7 years to achieve are guidelines used to understand the length of time it may take a student to be considered proficient in English and performing on grade level in their content area classes.

Health Services

Health services are provided by registered nurses and a school doctor. The purpose of health services is to aid in the early detection of health defects, to refer children for services when necessary and to promote good health habits and attitudes.

Communicable disease prevention needs everyone's cooperation. The best way to control a disease from spreading throughout the school is to keep your child home when he/she is ill. If your child is to be absent, we request that when you report the absence, you inform us of any communicable disease. Knowledge of the incidence of disease can help us in detection and prevention.

Vision and hearing examinations are given yearly as a preliminary survey to identify children who are having visual and/or hearing difficulties. Parents are reminded that these are simply screenings. It is recommended that all children have an ophthalmological exam prior to or upon entering school. This will ensure that your child does not have any visual problems that might hinder him/her academically. If any vision or audiological problems are noted, parents will be contacted.

Heights, weights and blood pressures are taken yearly and counseling is done on an individual basis when necessary.

Immunization records: A medical certificate of immunizations required by the state of New Jersey must be submitted before admission to school. Your pediatrician will have a record of these immunizations. Those excused for medical or religious reasons must submit an exemption form upon admission to school. Mantoux testing is required as directed by the state. Parents are requested to keep the school nurse up to date on any changes to these records.

Maintaining medical records: In order to keep pupils' records up to date, it is incumbent upon parents to supply new medical information to the school as it occurs.

Physical examinations are also mandated by the state for all children upon entering kindergarten. This examination must be done no more than 365 days prior to entry. Physical exams are also required upon transfer into the Verona Public Schools. They physical exam form (Universal Child Health Record) along with a copy of the most recent immunizations must be submitted to the school nurse within 30 days of school entrance.

First aid services will be administered by a nurse, teacher, principal or administrative assistant. In case of an accident or sudden illness, parents will be notified. Emergency information forms are collected in September each year, to provide us with a parents, guardian or emergency contact that can be reached during the school day. Please consider carefully the people you use for emergency contacts if the school is unable to reach you. These people need to be available during the school day and be willing to pick up and care for an ill or injured child. Please notify the office immediately if any changes occur regarding the information on the emergency form. During your child's day this form is our only link to you.

Administration of Medication Guidelines:

When a student requires a prescribed or an over the counter medication to be given during school hours for an extended period of time, an authorization must be sent by the parent empowering the school nurse to administer medication. Medication orders are to be provided to the nurse from the private physician detailing the diagnosis or type of illness involved, the name of the drug, dosage, time of administration and side effects. Medication forms can be accessed on the district website. Medication should be brought to the nurse in the original container, appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician. Medication must be hand delivered by the parent to the school. Under no circumstances should medication be carried by the child. Students who require medication (over the counter and prescription) in school must have a written order from their health care provider. Please submit all medications and physician's orders directly to the school nurse. Herbal remedies and nutritional supplements are not to be administered in school.

Nutrition Procedures

Class Parties

Class parties held over the course of the school year are Halloween, holiday party just prior to the December break, Valentine's Day, and an End of Year Picnic or class party. Students will be able to enjoy a treat at these parties, but it will be a treat which their parents send in with them from home. Parties will center on games, crafts, or activities rather than food, although students will enjoy the snack provided by their parents.

Birthday Celebrations

A student's birthday may be recognized in some way by his/her classroom teacher. In keeping with our food procedures, food may not be sent in from home in celebration of the day.

Nut Allergies

Tables have been designated as "Peanut/ Peanut Butter tables" in our cafeteria. Children that bring food items containing peanuts and peanut butter will be seated at the peanut butter table. Those children may choose a friend to join them without a peanut allergy.

Snack

A healthy snack for ALL K-4 students should be brought each day beginning on the first day of school.

ODE (Outdoor Discovery Environment)

The Outdoor Discovery Environment (ODE) is an outdoor nature study program that converted a wooded area adjacent to the school into a learning environment. The outdoor facilities includes a set of walking trails created in a wooded site adjacent to the school (Peckman River Discovery Trails), an interpretive bulletin board (Eagle Interpretive Center), an outdoor classroom of benches (Circle of Learning), and a butterfly garden for observation, projects, and presentations. These outdoor activities involve both general and environmental science as well as cross content lessons. This site work was completed totally with volunteer labor and donated materials- - a true community collaborative venture. Classroom teachers have the opportunity to use this site for outdoor lessons. We also have an instructor to teach specific ODE lessons aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards. Recently, an Eagle scout updated and extended the "ODE boardwalk." It has been judged to be worthy of both the Alliance for New Jersey Environmental Education (ANJEE) award as a "Wild School Site" and the National Wildlife Federation certification as a "Schoolyard Habitat Site." The program combines a natural outdoor classroom for reading, composition, social studies, art, and physical activities and as an outdoor

extension of the district science curriculum including soil, rocks and minerals, butterflies, land, water, plants, and animals, etc.

Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation

Elementary students in Verona are taught the **Conflict Resolution** approach to assist with problem solving any type of controversy or disagreement. Using the New Jersey State Bar Foundation (NJSBF) materials as a starting point, students apply the Win-Win Guidelines when they face any type of opposition. Conflict resolution lessons are taught on a weekly basis in each elementary classroom. Classroom teachers introduce the skill through mini-lessons, modeling, guided practice, independent practice, role-playing, and/or children's literature. Lessons are easily adapted to the students' learning abilities throughout the K-4 experience. Students are taught that there are various forms of conflict and the necessary tools needed to resolve them. They are also taught how to solve a problem. In order to reach resolution, we work with students to improve their communication skills. We believe that effective communication between the disputants is critical with solving any type of struggle between or among people. Home-school connections are assigned throughout the school year. Home-school connections require students to review and apply various conflict resolution skills at home. Each classroom including specialists, related services and special education have set up a Peace Place where students can meet to discuss a conflict. The Win-Win guidelines help our students deal with conflicts in such a way that all disputants feel comfortable with the outcome. Guidelines focus on taking time to cool off and finding alternative ways to express anger, stating a feeling using an "I Message", stating the problem as the other person sees it, taking responsibility for the problem, brainstorming solutions that satisfy both parties, and concluding with an affirmation. The Win-Win Guidelines are displayed for students' reference. Various tools such as cooling off techniques, breathing for calmness tips, alternatives to hitting, I-Message scripts and feelings vocabulary are available to all students as resources.

Each elementary school offers a **Peer Mediation** program. Research has proven that peer mediation is an effective tool that can be used by elementary students to help resolve conflicts. It empowers students to resolve their disputes creatively and cooperatively, while infusing critical thinking skills. Students in grades 3 and 4 may apply to be a trained peer mediator. Peer mediators are required to attend training sessions prior to taking their post. Prospective peer mediators practice mediation skills with the desired outcome focused on facilitating a problem solving approach while working with disputants that require a third party to help them reach resolution. They are also required to attend follow up meetings in order to maintain an active status. Peer mediators and parents sign a code of conduct outlining the expectations. Elementary students have the option to mediate a problem using the school wide peer mediation process. It is voluntary to work with a peer mediator. The peer mediator serves as a "third party" that assists the disputants with problem solving. Brainstorming as many possible solutions to a problem is key to the peer mediation process. Our peer mediators work in pairs to assist the disputants as they discuss and solve their problem with the goal of reaching a solution that works for both parties. Peer mediators reference the Win-Win Guidelines while working with disputants. Peer mediators encourage disputants to retell the problem from their individual perspective and express their feelings. The role of the peer mediator is one of a facilitator encouraging disputants to discuss the problem in a non-judgmental manner while applying active listening skills. Conflict resolution and peer mediation have proven to reduce disputes. Verona elementary students are taught a specific skill set when approaching a disagreement. It also fosters a culture where students develop and apply real life skills that evolve throughout their development.

Students recognize that a course of action is possible to solve a conflict. Conflict resolution and peer mediation fosters cooperation where students work together for a common purpose. **We take pride in training our students to be peacemakers in our beloved Verona community.**